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**1962/10/16**

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DRAFT  
Gen Taylor  
16 October 1962

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MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting at the White House on Cuban MRBM's, October 16, 1962

Attendance: The President  
Vice President  
Secretary of State  
Secretary of the Treasury  
Secretary of Defense  
Under Secretary of State Ball  
Deputy Secretary of Defense  
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff  
Assistant Secretary of State for  
Latin America, Mr. Martin  
General Carter  
Mr. McGeorge Bundy  
Mr. Sorenson

1. General Carter led off by showing the President a recent intelligence report on Cuban MRBM's. It was stated that it was difficult to say whether any of the missiles were operational. That required stable, hard platforms, the presence of which could not be assured from the air photos. Secretary McNamara pointed out there was no ~~SECURITY GUARDS~~ <sup>at the site</sup> ~~this fact~~, hence it was difficult for him to believe that atomic storage was present.

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2. Upon the request of CIA and Secretary McNamara, the President approved such U-2 flights as might be necessary in the future. Low level flights were discussed but no decision was taken.

3. Secretary Rusk expressed surprise the Soviets had given MRBM's to Cuba. He thought that we should respond by a series of acts which were divested under two alternative heads: either start with A Sudden air strikes against military targets, or, alternatively, a slow buildup of acts prior to military strikes. He explained the latter as including an appeal to OAS, possibly getting word to Castro that he risks destruction or betrayal. At some point we might call up selected military forces and announce what has taken place in Cuba and stating that we intend to conduct continued surveillance of the Island. We might also reinforce our forces in Guantanamo and in the southeastern part of the United States. Finally, we might step up action in the guerrilla field, Review (?) possible exile political organizations, and alert our allies while asking them to stop all communication with Cuba.

4. Secretary McNamara emphasized the need to schedule air strikes prior to the time when the missiles would become operational. His thought was to strike all missile aircraft and nuclear storage sites as fast as possible. Thereafter we should be prepared to invade within seven days while mobilizing to the level of 150,000.

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5. General Taylor stressed the importance of surprise in making an air attack and added that it would be necessary to have a naval blockade to prevent the continued introduction of war materials.

6. Secretary Rusk pointed out that if the Cubans fired a single missile that would be the start of a general nuclear war and Khrushchev must know this.

7. The President wondered why Khrushchev has given missiles to the Cubans. Rusk replied that it was probable to add MRBM's to his strike capability and perhaps provoke us into an involvement before a Berlin crisis.

8. Secretary Dillon pointed out that the followed political track would give the USSR time to utter threats of retaliation from which it might be difficult to withdraw, hence he would favor a quick, sudden strike.

9. Bundy mentioned the adverse effect on allies of the actions under consideration.

10. The Vice President expressed himself in favor of taking out the missiles although recognizing the adverse factors.

11. General Taylor called attention to the fact that there would not be a single air strike but rather a continuous series in order to assure no reappearance of offensive weapons.

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12. The President summed up the points which must be decided as follows:

- a. Should we attack just the three missile bases or the broader targets suggested by Secretary McNamara?
- b. <sup>Should we</sup> Review (?) the foregoing and institute a naval blockade?
- c. Whom should we consult prior to action?

He later expressed the certainty that we should at a minimum take out all known missiles. At the same time, we should prepare for the complete air strike and be ready for a follow-up invasion.

13. There was some discussion of the need to expand the number of individuals privileged to the plan. General Taylor pointed out the need to give need-to-know information to certain commanders, expressing the view that about ten individuals represented the requirement at this time.

14. It was agreed to meet again on the same day at 7 p. m.

MAXWELL D. TAYLOR  
Chairman  
Joint Chiefs of Staff

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